

Message Text

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SUBJ: GOP REACTS TO PUBLICITY ON ACHE GUAYAKI INDIANS

SUMMARY. REACTING TO RENEWED ALLEGATIONS OF GENOCIDE AGAINST THE ACHE GUAYAKI INDIANS, THE GOP HAS TAKEN A NUMBER OF STEPS RECENTLY TO WHO ITS CONCERN FOR THE TRIBE'S WELFARE. A HIGH-RANKING GOP OFFICIAL INSPECTED THE NATIONAL COLONY FOR THE ACHE GUAYAKI ON FEBRUARY 16, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS PLEDGED TO HELP THE TRIBE OBTAIN LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS. THESE MOVES ARE VIEWED BY INDIAN WELFARE ACTIVISTS HERE AS SIGNS OF POTENTIALLY MORE EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE ACHE. END SUMMARY.

1. CONCERNED OVER CONTINUING CHARGES THAT THE ACHE GUAYAKI INDIANS ARE THE VICTIMS OF GENOCIDE, THE GOP RECENTLY HAS TAKEN SEVERAL STEPS TO DEMONSTRATE ITS CONCERN FOR THEIR WELFARE. ON FEBRUARY 16, THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LED A GROUP OF GOP OFFICIALS, LOCAL NEWSMEN AND OTHER OBSERVERS ON AN INSPECTION OF THE NATIONAL COLONY FOR THE ACHE GUAYAKI. FURTHER VISITS TO ACHE ENCAMPMENTS ARE PLANNED. ON FEBRUARY 22, THE NATIONAL LAND REFORM AGENCY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO RESOLVE SOON
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A LONG-STANDING DISPUTE OVER OWNERSHIP OF THE SITE OF THE NATIONAL COLONY AND TO MAKE LAND AVAILABLE FOR A SECOND MAJOR AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT FOR THE ACHE. ACTUAL TRANSFER OF THE LAND HAS NOT TAKEN PLACE PENDING RESOLUTION OF CERTAIN TECHNICAL QUESTIONS, INCLUDING THE INDIANS' LEGAL CAPACITY TO COLLECTIVELY OWN

PROPERTY. (THE EMBASSY WILL PROMPTLY REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS REGARD). THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE SEEN BY INDIAN WELFARE ACTIVISTS INTERVIEWED BY THE EMBASSY AS SIGNS THAT THE GOP MAY RESPOND MORE EFFECTIVELY AND QUICKLY THAN IN THE PAST TO REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS WHICH DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THE COUNTRY'S INDIAN POPULATION.

2. THE RECENT ACTIVITIES ARE THE FIRST PUBLIC REACTION BY THE GOP TO RENEWED CHARGES THAT THE ACHE GUAYAKI INDIANS ARE THE VICTIMS OF GENOCIDE. GOP OFFICIALS AND OTHERS FAMILIAR WITH THE INDIAN SITUATION IN PARAGUAY HAVE EXPRESSED DISMAY AND INDIGNATION AT THE ALLEGATIONS. THE COLORADO PARTY DAILY NEWSPAPER, PATRIA, ON FEBRUARY 23 PRINTED A FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL ACCUSING "LEFTISTS" IN THE U.S. OF FABRICATING THE CHARGES OF GENOCIDE AND MAINTAINING THAT THE ALLEGATIONS ARE BELIED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN NOT ONLY FOR THE ACHE BUT FOR THE 16 OTHER (AND LARGER) TRIBES IN PARAGUAY. ACCORDING TO THE EDITORIAL, THE GOVERNMENT UP TO END OF 1976 HAD SET ASIDE MORE THAN 121,500 HECTARES OF LAND FOR 23 INDIANS COLONIES, AND THIS YEAR HAS AGREED TO ESTABLISH NOT ONLY THE NEW COLONY FOR THE ACHE BUT AN 11,300-HECTARES COLONY FOR GUARANI INDIANS IN NORTHERN PARAGUAY AS WELL.

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